

Maine

## STATE COMPREHENSIVE OUTDOOR RECREATION PLAN 2009-2014

Maine Bureau of Parks & Lands  
[www.maine.gov/doc/parks](http://www.maine.gov/doc/parks)

### Executive Summary

**“Connect People with the Outdoors for Health, Conservation, Maine’s Economy, and....Fun!”**

Every five years, the State of Maine is required to produce a State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) in order to qualify for the federal Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF).

As part of the SCORP report, a list of priorities forming the basis of an implementation strategy were defined (and are listed below).



***Since 1965, the State of Maine has received just shy of \$40 million in Land and Water Conservation Funds, which have been used in every county.***

#### ***2009-2014 ME SCORP Implementation Strategies (Overview...For More Details, See Chapter V)***

Connect Mainers of All Ages with Outdoor Recreation	Connect Lands and Communities to Nurture Quality of Place	Connect Outdoor Recreation Stakeholders to Improve Collaboration	Connect Trails to Establish or Improve Regional Trail Systems
Strive to provide a broad range of outdoor recreation opportunities for diverse interests and abilities.	Improve infrastructure at and connectivity between our parks, lands, preserves, etc. Recognize and address maintenance challenges.	Acknowledge the importance of private landowners allowing public recreation. Nurture landowner relations.	Invest in sound planning. Involve user groups, landowners, and government agencies in a collaborative effort to develop a vision for extended trail systems across the state.
Focus on ensuring youth are active in the outdoors and engaged with nature.	Improve planning and coordination efforts that empower communities to identify and protect places and projects of local value.	Bring together diverse elements within communities to better manage and promote outdoor recreation.	Support coordinated trail management including sharing GIS data, public information, and technical expertise.
Improve appreciation for outdoor recreation’s benefits and awareness of existing opportunities.	Focus on access to open spaces, including bike and pedestrian access. Better link town centers and trails.	Look for opportunities to form or join larger projects (e.g., East Coast Greenway) to leverage support and tourism.	Find ways to further develop gateway communities as regional trail hubs, including tourism and economic development efforts.

## More About the SCORP Plan

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The federal Land and Water Conservation Fund program (LWCF) provides matching funds to states for statewide outdoor recreation planning and for acquisition and development of public outdoor recreation areas and facilities. Since 1965, approximately \$39.5 million of LWCF money has been used for projects in Maine. Administered at the federal level by the National Park Service and at the state level by the Bureau of Parks and Lands (BPL) in the Maine Department of Conservation, LWCF grants can provide up to 50% of the allowable costs for approved acquisition or development projects. Municipalities and tribal governments are eligible to apply for local LWCF grants through BPL.

***State participation in LWCF requires preparation of a Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP), and approval of the plan by the National Park Service (NPS).***

Prior to 2001, Maine state law required BP&L to periodically report to the governor on the supply of and demand for outdoor recreation facilities and how these might be met (12 MRSA 1817). Submittal of the SCORP to the Governor accomplished this reporting requirement. In 2001, the Maine Legislature amended this law to require the BP&L director to submit a state comprehensive outdoor recreation plan to the joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over state parks and public lands matters every 5 years.

The planning process for the 2009-2014 Maine SCORP was intended to use best available resources to shape a vision for outdoor recreation needs and opportunities in Maine for the next five years. Details on the planning process can be found in **Appendix A** of the report.

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### Who is eligible for LWCF funds?

- ◆Municipal agencies (towns, school districts, & counties)
  - ◆Tribal governments
  - ◆State agencies
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### How else can this report support outdoor recreation in Maine?

- ◆The ME SCORP serves as a guiding document for outdoor recreation in the state. It synthesizes data, public input, and principles from recreation planning. It can serve as a source document for recreation studies or plans, grant proposals, campaigns, and any other initiative to support or develop outdoor recreation projects.

## ***Trends Affecting Outdoor Recreation in Maine***

### ***1. Maine has one of the oldest populations in the Nation.***

As a percentage of the population, Maine's seniors are a growing demographic. As "Baby Boomers" drive the "graying" of Maine's population, their outdoor recreation preferences need to be taken into consideration.

### ***2. There is growing concern that youth are not forging relationships with the outdoors.***

It is feared that a new generation of youth may be coming of age without any connection to the outdoors. This phenomenon is linked to health problems (e.g., obesity) and, if unchecked, has ominous implications for future conservation.

### ***3. Sprawl is a continuous threat to outdoor recreation, especially in more developed/developing regions of the state.***

The fragmenting of rural/natural areas reduces the availability of outdoor recreation opportunities, especially close to more populated areas. Additionally, increased posting of lands is another form of fragmentation limiting recreation opportunities.

### ***4. Changes in Maine's Large-Scale Forest Landscapes Continue to Evolve.***

Mainers and visitors alike rely heavily on public access to privately owned forest lands. The continuation of this tradition is of concern due to rapid changes in ownership and ownership types.

### ***5. "Quality of Place" is an Economic Asset.***

Investment in natural, place-based assets is seen as part of enhancing the valuable Maine "brand" that makes the state a desirable place to visit or live in. Attractive outdoor recreation opportunities, a huge part of Maine's quality of place, are therefore a vital asset.

### **Why does this plan matter beyond LWCF funding requirements?**

◆ **Quality of Place** Outdoor recreation is an integral part of Maine life. Mainers participate in outdoor recreation activities above national and New England levels<sup>1</sup>. Furthermore, outdoor recreation is a key component of quality of place, which recognizes that special attributes, such as access to stunning woods and waters, make Maine an attractive place to live and visit. Access to quality outdoor recreation experiences is an extremely valuable asset as Maine competes to lure employers and employees

◆ **Tourism** Tourism is Maine's largest industry, producing \$10.1 billion in goods and services, \$425 million in tax revenue, and 140,000 jobs. Maine's natural resources and recreation opportunities are central to Maine's tourism industry. Outdoor recreation is listed as the primary purpose for between 18% and 23% (depending upon season) of all overnight leisure trips in Maine.

◆ **Health** When 25% of Maine high school students and 36% of Maine

*According to the Maine Office of Tourism, two-thirds of the top 36 Maine information requests involve outdoor recreation opportunities.*



kindergartners have a body mass above the 85th percentile, there is reason to worry about the implications of a generation of less healthy Mainers. Outdoor recreation is one tool to combat obesity while also promoting mental wellness. Ensuring access to the outdoors and instilling a love of time spent outside is a public health strategy.

◆ **Economic Impact** Outdoor recreation is major driver of economic activity in Maine. The three examples listed above represent only a portion of Maine economic activity associated with outdoor recreation.

◆ **Conservation** If Maine is to have future stewards, conservation advocates, and citizens concerned with protecting nature, then those potential leaders need to have the opportunity to fall in love with the outdoors now.

Baxter State Park (BSP) (2007)	Maine State Parks (2005)	ATV Activity in Maine ('03/'04)
Total economic activity in Maine generated by visitors to BSP equalled \$6.9 million.	Visitors to Maine State Parks spent \$60.3 million on direct goods and services.	\$156 million net spending went towards purchasing, registering, and operating ATVs.

#### **Sources:**

- Morris, Charles E., Robert Roper, & Thomas Allen (2006). *The Economic Contributions of Maine State Parks: A Survey of Visitor Characteristics, Perceptions, and Spending*. Margaret Chase Smith Policy Center, University of Maine.
- Morris, Charles E., Thomas Allen Jonathan Rubin, Brian N. Bronson, & Cynthia S. Bastey. (2005). *Economic Contributions of ATV-Related Activities in Maine*. Margaret Chase Smith Policy Center, University of Maine.
- Whittin, Anja and Jensen Bissell (2008). *Baxter State Park Economic Impact Study*. Retrieved from [www.baxterstateparkauthority.com](http://www.baxterstateparkauthority.com)

<sup>1</sup> Green, Gary T., Susan Parker, Carter J. Betz, and H. Ken Cordell (2009). *Maine and the Maine Market Region: A Report to the Maine Department of Conservation by the Pioneering Research Group, Southern Research Station, USDA Forest Service, Athens, Georgia*

<b>Steering Committee</b>	<p><b>Will Harris (Chairperson)</b>          -Director, Maine Bureau of Parks and Lands  <b>John J. Daigle</b>          -University of Maine Parks, Recreation, and Tourism Program  <b>Elizabeth Hertz</b>          -Maine State Planning Office  <b>Cindy Hazelton</b>          -Maine Recreation and Park Association  <b>Regis Tremblay</b>          Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife  <b>Dan Stewart</b>          -Maine Department of Transportation  <b>George Lapointe</b>          -Maine Department of Marine Resources  <b>Phil Savignano</b>          -Maine Office of Tourism  <b>Mick Rogers</b>          - Maine Bureau of Parks and Lands</p>	<p><b>2009-2014ME SCORP Outdoor Recreation Demand - Sources: (Details in Chapter III)</b></p> <p><b><i>Maine and the Maine Market Region Report</i></b></p> <p>This report, obtained from the USDA Forest Service, details Maine and New England recreation participation by activity type and demographic categories.</p> <p><b>License &amp; Registration Data</b></p> <p>License and Registration data, for activities such as snowmobiling and hunting, forms a piece of the recreation demand picture.</p> <p><b>Visitation Data</b></p> <p>Parks and other sites collecting visitation figures are another source of insight into recreation demand.</p>
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### ***The Supply of Outdoor Recreation Resources***

Outdoor recreation in Maine spans diverse activities and settings ranging from tennis in a highly developed park to backpacking through remote forests. Public conservation and recreation lands now total slightly over 17% of Maine's land. Still more land is available for public recreation through open-door policies held by many private landowners. Public, private non-profit, private landowners, and commercial entities are all involved in providing outdoor recreation opportunities.

Since 2003, an additional 3,317 miles of ATV trails have been funded. Non-motorized trail systems are also increasing. Non-profit organizations such as Maine Huts and Trails and the Appalachian Mountain Club have each acquired lands and each are actively developing non-motorized trail systems in Maine. For a more detailed discussion, see chapter IV.

***Outdoor Recreation is vital to Maine's economy, health, and culture. Concerted, collaborative efforts are needed to guide recreation planning and developments during challenging fiscal times. This is especially true given that the Maine State Planning Office estimates over \$300 million in total green infrastructure needs (State Parks & Historic Sites, nature tourism infrastructure, coastal beaches, fish hatcheries, trails, and the Land for Maine's Future program).<sup>2</sup>***

<sup>2</sup> Harris, Jody (ed). (2006). *Sustaining Maine's Green Infrastructure: a White Paper Prepared for the Governor's Steering Committee on Maine's Natural Resource-based Industry*. Maine State Planning Office. Augusta, ME